

Strengthening Communities

Southern Region Successes

July 2020 - June 2021

Southern Region Community Development Extension Impacts



88,573

Number of jobs created/retained



384

Number of new alliances or networks formed through some type of formal agreement or MOU



28,034

Number of businesses created, retained, or expanded



11,863

Number of participants who report new leadership roles & opportunities undertaken



1,120

Number of plans adopted and implemented in community, agency, local government, business, or disaster



\$2,058,870,461

Grants acquired by organizations or communities

\$5,226,307

Value of in-kind resources contributed by organizations or communities



Universities Reporting Numerically
20

Full Time Equivalents
111.82

Turn over to read impact stories from around the region

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Alabama A&M University

Career Countdown is a program that uses interactive lessons to link interests and skills to career choices and goals. Over 1,288 students completed 77 sessions, with 93% of survey respondents planning to complete additional research on careers and 54% completing a career plan shortly after the program. Under a growing CRD team, we have additionally launched new programs to support entrepreneurs, Small Business Café, and Filing for Success, which have engaged over 40 entrepreneurs so far.

Auburn University

Alabama Extension received a \$40,000 grant through the Alabama Department of Economic & Community Affairs to conduct a statewide campaign to promote the 2020 Census. Overall, campaign efforts led by local and state Extension staff reached over 54,603 individuals through live and online programs, secured 546 free media pieces, and generated over 2,000 social media posts reaching 206,306 individuals. Alabama reached a record census participation rate and successfully retained our number of US Congressional seats.

University of Arkansas

Community, Professional & Economic Development (CPED) offers programs and resources to support community development, strategic planning, public policy education, economic development, leadership development, agricultural education, local government, and workforce development. Impacts are significant. For example, our November 2020 statewide election ballot issue websites attracted 188,753 unique views and videos were watched 17,942 times. Last year, our Arkansas Procurement Technical Assistance Center helped Arkansas companies secure 1,905 contract awards valued at nearly \$190 million.

University of Florida

In Citrus County, 122 residents participated in the Economic and Material Well-Being program. Most attendees (97%) learned and used effective financial management and consumer economic practices, thus increasing their financial capability. Spending plans submitted by participants showed that most (97%) started tracking their income and spending. Additionally, a large percentage of attendees (97%) increased their savings, each saving approximately \$1,000 per year.

Florida A&M University

Community Resource Development builds capacity and promotes economic vitality in Florida's most vulnerable communities, exceeding \$3.2 million in impact. Innovative education and outreach programs are conducted in the areas of Entrepreneurship-Business Development, Family Heirs Property and Estate Planning, Rural Prosperity and Resiliency with an emphasis on Black Legacy Communities, Community-Urban Agriculture, and Recidivism and Re-Entry.

Fort Valley State University

Fort Valley State University's Cooperative Extension Program partnered with Alcorn State University and University of Arkansas-Pine Bluff Extension professionals to develop a farm financial literacy curriculum to respond to the need to increase the level of financial awareness and preparedness for the nation's agrarian community. The curriculum was offered virtually as a train-the-trainer opportunity in November 2020 to approximately 100+ Extension professionals from across the country.

University of Georgia

Between 2020 - 2021 the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH) continued to help Georgia communities address local housing issues. The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) granted GICH communities CHIP grants totaling \$3.9 million. GICH communities were also awarded a total of \$13.3 million Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) in the 2020-21 cycle., and 9% low-income housing tax credits which equated to \$15.1 million in investment.

University of Kentucky

In response to historic flooding in March, 2021, UK Extension helped coordinate the Appalachian Kentucky Local Business Flood Relief Fund, established with partners broadly branded as Appalachian Rises. The fund awarded 104 grants totaling \$412,797 to local business owners in 17 flood impacted counties. These businesses represent a mix of restaurants, experience-based retail, community and personal services, contracting, and real estate or property management supporting 287 jobs in the region.

Southern University

SU JAGriculture, the Southern University emergency preparedness initiative, was selected as a New Technologies for Ag Extension project through the Extension Foundation. Marking the start of hurricane season, the JAGriculture team designed, planned, and facilitated the Inaugural Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Recovery Virtual Conference on June 1st-3rd. The conference was attended by over 175 Extension professionals, community members, agencies, organizations, and farmers. Additionally, over 90% of attendees reported an increase in knowledge and awareness.

Mississippi State University

MSU-Extension Service has worked diligently across the state in the areas of business development, downtown revitalization, health, tourism, and local foods. Programming was developed to revitalize 23 small towns, implement a virtual business planning cohort, launch a podcast, create a tourism leadership initiative, improve farmers' markets, foster business development in the retail sector and forest industry, and aid rural grocery stores. Over 343,000 people were educated and six new companies and small businesses have opened in communities that utilized Extension education and resources.

North Carolina State University

In September of 2020, NCSU selected the Mountain-West Region for participation in CREATE BRIDGES, a project designed to help rural communities build their capacity for strengthening the retail, tourism, hospitality, and entertainment sectors. The project collaborates with a regional steering committee in order to define best practices for engaging with and surveying regional businesses and employees. The project is hosting a business resource fair in the Fall to share findings of the year-long research phase.

Oklahoma State University

OSU Extension's County Government Training Program helps county government officers and their staff learn how to perform mandated duties more effectively, efficiently, and with greater knowledge and awareness. In the last 12 months, a uniform chart of accounts has been implemented by 75 of Oklahoma's 77 counties. County officials have been trained in producing correct financial statements, complying with grant requirements, and qualifying for federal funds. In addition, auditing and annual budgeting has become more efficient.

University of Puerto Rico

The Agricultural Extension Service developed a family micro-business for the sale of "sofrito." A leading woman from the municipality of Florida received training through UPR which helped her to develop a strategic plan, apply for permits, and register her innovative product. The business currently has more than 50 customers to whom it sells through phone calls and self-service, taking the appropriate measures to protect against COVID-19, and has generated more than \$6,000.

Clemson University

Clemson Extension continues to promote entrepreneurial development by supporting new entrants into SC agribusiness, providing business planning, and offering assistance for rural entrepreneurs. To increase public awareness of agriculture and its benefits, Extension offers a series of education and outreach programs, including grant writing assistance, developing business planning curricula, and allocating seed money for a myriad of projects ranging from farmers' market management and Opportunity Zone community-based visioning to arts program development.

University of Tennessee

Extension focused on enhancing community development and rural competitiveness through six funded projects (one USDA, one EPA/Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, one National 4-H Council, three University of Tennessee Seed grants). These projects supported infrastructure (broadband, digital literacy, water services), rural health (diabetes prevention), value-added dairy businesses, and improved farm profitability across Tennessee.

Texas A&M University

Texas Rural Leadership Program contracted for services (grant) through the Episcopal Health Foundation, elevating leadership development in creating three rural health resource centers (separate counties). A formal series of recommendations was developed, focused on increasing efficiency and effectiveness of processes necessary to create such centers. Strategic planning exercises provided to two of the three sites moved them to key measures necessary for operational status.

Prairie View A&M University

PVAMU's Cooperative Extension Program provided certifications toward value-added impact training, addressing the much-needed rebuilding and recovery efforts in rural Texas. Program participants have the option to choose one of four concentration areas of training: Welding, Construction, Certified Nursing Assistant, or Electrical Technician. In 2020, 82 participants received training, 71 received a certification, and 53 were placed in a job.

Virginia Cooperative Extension Service

In response to on-going challenges with accessing healthy foods and the resulting diet-related diseases in Lynchburg, Virginia, Cooperative Extension implemented Food For a Long Life (FFLL), a community-based project. Through intergenerational nutrition education sessions, FFLL increased healthy food consumption, access, and knowledge of 120 preschoolers and at least 20 adult participants. Extension also established a formal partnership with the food pantry and a faith-based organization to deliver nutrition education weekly during food distributions.